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Chairman: Mr. CISSÉ (Senegal)

CONTENTS

AGENDA ITEM 95: SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT, INCLUDING QUESTIONS RELATING TO THE WORLD SOCIAL SITUATION AND TO YOUTH, AGEING, DISABLED PERSONS AND THE FAMILY (continued)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.30 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 95: SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT, INCLUDING QUESTIONS RELATING TO THE WORLD SOCIAL SITUATION AND TO YOUTH, AGEING, DISABLED PERSONS AND THE FAMILY (continued) (A/49/24 and Add.1, A/49/204-E/1994/90, A/49/205-E/1994/91, A/49/213, A/49/287-S/1994/894 and Corr.1, A/49/294, A/49/307-S/1994/958, A/49/381, A/49/422-S/1994/1086, A/49/434, 435, 462 and Corr.1 and 506; A/C.3/49/4/Rev.1)

1. Mr. AL-ZADGALY (Oman) said that man was the prime mover and the target of development. Human activity was the very essence of the development of States and it was therefore essential to promote the development of human resources and take full advantage of them. Oman was therefore extremely interested in the World Summit for Social Development to be held in Copenhagen in 1995, as it would allow the international community to examine in depth problems relating to social progress.

2. Oman followed a policy of protecting the elderly based on the teachings of Arab Muslim traditions, a main objective of which was social assistance in which older persons were cared for and respected; every human being was entitled to a dignified life, irrespective of his state of health. The State offered social protection for its citizens throughout their lifetime through its institutions, which took care of their material needs and provided benefits such as retirement at age 60 and a social security system under which the fruits of development were distributed among the population.

3. Concern for the human being was such in Oman that the disabled were not neglected, since they were part of the human resources of any society. In Oman there was a policy of training and care as well as equal opportunities for the disabled so as to ensure their participation in society. To that end, training courses were provided and efforts made to create awareness about the disabled among the public at large by all means available. Labour legislation guaranteed employment for the disabled in the civil service; they were also assisted in setting up various commercial projects. The aim was to achieve their participation in all social, cultural and sports activities for the disabled at national and international levels.

4. Oman was doing its utmost for the development of human resources and to ensure that young people played a part in the establishment of a new world order. It had devised training policies, programmes and projects for youth so that they could serve their country and the international community, based on the principles of the United Nations. Youth centres had been set up and all the necessary resources allocated with the aim of ensuring that young people could contribute to all regional and international activities.

5. Mrs. MSUYA (United Republic of Tanzania) said that the glaring disparities between the developed, rich and powerful countries and those which were underdeveloped, poor and had the least power formed the North-South divide and explained the different approaches to the problem of development. The proposed

"agenda for development" would have an important role to play in dealing with the consequences of that divide. In the view of her delegation, social development must be considered in the context of the agenda for development. In that connection, it commended the report by the Chairman of the Preparatory Committee for the World Summit for Social Development, issued following the Committee's second session, which laid down a plan of action aimed at redressing the imbalance between the rich and the poor.

6. Despite overall economic growth, progress had been marred by deteriorating social conditions, especially in Africa and the least developed countries. The Declaration on Social Progress and Development, adopted 25 years previously, provided clear guidelines for the integration of economic and social action aimed at improving the social environment. In an increasingly interdependent world, international partnership and cooperation were required so that States could ensure the social progress and well-being of their citizens.

7. The Summit would take up three basic issues: the eradication of poverty, enhancement of productive employment and social integration, which were particularly relevant in the current environment, since they concerned above all the disadvantaged groups in society, namely youth, the elderly and the disabled. Africa and the least developed countries could not resolve all their social problems alone: the international community and in particular the developed North must provide their support and cooperation. The draft declaration and draft programme of action would serve as a basis for elaborating appropriate national strategies and outline measures to be taken by the development partners. That was important for ensuring progress in debt cancellation, improving terms of trade, increasing investments, encouraging South-South cooperation and mobilizing additional resources for social development.

8. Mr. KHRYSKOV (Russian Federation) welcomed United Nations efforts in recent years to define a suitable role for the Organization in resolving social development problems in the short and long term, and identifying obstacles to such development as well as ways and means of overcoming them. The Organization's activities concerning humanitarian and social cooperation should be in keeping with its efforts to prevent and resolve conflicts and to guarantee peace and development.

9. In the social sphere his country had had to pay a high price for the radical constitutional, political and economic changes introduced, particularly with regard to employment, social security, housing and medical care. The President and the Government of the Russian Federation had taken a series of steps to overcome the social consequences of such reforms. Basic legislation was being amended and social protection measures targeted at sections of the population requiring special assistance were being carried out in conformity with international standards and would undoubtedly contribute to the success of the democratic reforms.

10. Social instability, xenophobia, aggressive nationalism and intolerance carried within them the seeds of armed conflict and civil war. It was therefore essential to find a solution which would take due account of the function of

political institutions in social development, the close link between the solution to social problems and the guaranteeing of human rights, and the effectiveness of democratic institutions. The World Summit for Social Development would be particularly important from that perspective, since it should make tangible progress in preventing an increase in social instability in many parts of the world, including countries with economies in transition. His delegation welcomed the work done to date by the Preparatory Committee for the World Summit and hoped that the draft declaration and programme of action would refer to the social aspects of the difficult period of economic change. The President of the Russian Federation had set up a national preparatory committee, under the chairmanship of the Vice-President, and had announced that he would personally attend the Summit.

11. The success of democratic reforms in the countries with economies in transition correlated directly with the solution of social problems. It was essential for the international community to provide effective support in order to ensure that economic change in those countries succeeded and that all social groups adjusted to the new situation. The United Nations should continue to implement programmes relating to the family even after the end of the International Year of the Family. The results of the recent Conference on Families were a valuable basis for further measures in that regard. The family was of enduring importance, for the life and development of the human being and also in society, in the raising of new generations and in the attainment of social stability and progress. He recalled his delegation's suggestion that 1995-2004 be proclaimed the decade of the family and that a programme of activities should be worked out focusing on the family's role in social progress - one of its major agents and one of its major targets.

12. His delegation supported the Secretary-General's policy of emphasizing the social aspect of international cooperation under the leadership of the United Nations and of assigning priority to social issues in the Organization's own activities. In that regard the restructuring of the Secretariat units with responsibility for social questions was necessary and justifiable. However, before proceeding further, it might be useful to analyse the results of the first stage of reorganization. He hoped that restructuring would enable the Secretariat staff to realize the aims of the United Nations more effectively and to produce documentation on social, political, economic, legal and other issues more efficiently. That would require improvement of the Organization's internal coordination. It might also be useful to draw up a general plan of United Nations activities which would cover the whole range of questions relating to social development at the three levels - national, regional and international.

13. He noted the increase in the activities of the Economic Commission for Europe in support of States with economies in transition. The regional system of cooperation for solving social problems had great potential and should be exploited to the full. It would be reasonable to call all the regional commissions "economic and social".

14. The Russian Federation was prepared to participate in any form of mutually beneficial cooperation at the bilateral, regional and international level in

order to solve social problems and would support suggestions that the international community should engage in effective and constructive activities to that end.

15. Mr. KIM (Democratic People's Republic of Korea) reviewed the United Nations international instruments on social issues. The situation in that field remained serious and that posed a threat to the survival of humankind. The economic crisis, racial and ethnic conflicts, external debt, lack of commitment to investment, protectionism, massive flows of refugees and displaced persons and natural disasters had exacerbated the economic situation and hampered social development, particularly in the developing countries. The international community should take decisive action to eradicate poverty, expand productive employment and enhance social integration. His delegation therefore attached the utmost importance to the World Summit for Social Development and would do all in its power to make the Summit a milestone in international cooperation to achieve social development and create a new and peaceful world free from all forms of inequality.

16. The programme of action to be adopted at the Summit should include action-oriented initiatives at the international level, with a firm political commitment to the allocation of resources. That could make a substantial contribution to social development all over the world. He paid tribute to the work of the Preparatory Committee and in particular the Danish Government's excellent preparations for the success of the Summit.

17. His Government had taken various measures with regard to social welfare, including legislation on labour and on the family. It had also instituted universal compulsory 11-year education, free medical care, guaranteed work for all according to their needs and hope. Special care for persons with disabilities had also been provided, such as schools, vocational schools, factories, rest centres and sanatoria. It had also paid special attention to youth training and had proclaimed 28 August as "Youth Day". The Korean people would continue to defend man-centred socialism and was ready to contribute to the success of social development world wide.

18. Ms. TOMIČ (Slovenia) stressed the need to address efficiently the three core issues of the World Summit on Social Development - the eradication of poverty, the creation of productive employment, and the enhancement of social integration. That could be done through reliable, realistic and long-term policy recommendations which should target specific groups and include appropriate means of implementation and monitoring. Socio-economic development should be human-centred, given the problems of social disintegration and individual isolation. Emphasis should be placed on empowerment, participation and inclusion within society. Social development policy should therefore embody fundamental ethical principles, which found their universal legal expression in the human rights Covenants. Slovenia had recently hosted a United Nations Seminar on Ethical and Spiritual Dimensions of Social Progress. Her delegation could provide information on its results in time for the third session of the Preparatory Committee for the World Summit for Social Development, in January 1995.

19. With regard to social development, after two years of difficulty resulting from the disintegration of the former Yugoslavia, Slovenia had achieved macroeconomic stability and sustained growth through programmes of socio-economic adjustment, privatization of public enterprises and the emergence of a large and relatively strong private sector. In the legislative process, continued efforts had been made to establish an appropriate and far-reaching safety net to mitigate the shocks of structural change and unemployment and care for those in most need. The Law on Social Security had been passed in 1992 and a minimum level of social security was guaranteed for all by the Constitution.

20. The protection of the least advantaged and the granting of equality of opportunity to all were central to any social policy claiming to be just and compatible with human rights obligations. Following the structural changes that had occurred in Slovene society, employment policies had focused on youth unemployment in order to avoid marginalization of young people and enable their productive integration into society. Unemployment benefits and training assistance continued for a maximum of three years. Employment programmes were promoting self-employment and employment in small and medium-size companies, and ensuring that young people in rural areas had access to training. As a result of such policies, the unemployment rate had decreased by two percentage points for the first time in several years. As for the adaptation of the retirement system to the new requirements of an ageing population, due attention would be given to social benefits for the old, such as pensions, housing and retirement homes.

21. She hoped that the General Assembly, during its fiftieth session, would strengthen youth policies and endorse the United Nations world programme of action for youth towards the year 2000 and beyond. Slovenia had, in cooperation with youth organizations, formulated its national policy and programme to improve the situation of its young people, and hoped that youth-related concerns would be adequately incorporated into the preparations for the World Summit for Social Development and the Fourth World Conference on Women.

22. She welcomed the adoption of the Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities at the previous session of the General Assembly, and the designation of a Special Rapporteur for those Rules. Her delegation was confident that the Rules would help to guide national policies towards ensuring full respect of the human rights of disabled persons. A meaningful and coherent development policy called for global cooperation and coordination; the entire United Nations system had to work in an integrated manner.

23. Mr. ALI (Iraq) recalled that social development was directly related to the human being, as the centre of society and State. Progress could be achieved only if countries paid due attention to all aspects of social development. In developing countries, social progress was slow and could even lose ground. If the recession continued, the differences between the societies in the industrialized countries and those of the poorest countries would increase.

24. Progress had been made in Iraq regarding the provision of services, especially to the most needy sectors: free access for young people to education and science, integration of the disabled, housing, and remuneration and health cover for elderly people in need. Such progress had, however, been hindered by the sanctions imposed four years previously.

25. He welcomed the holding of the World Summit for Social Development; his delegation believed that human rights-related social problems affected social development. The achievement of democracy and respect for human rights were linked with the achievement of economic development and with the fulfilment of the obligations which devolved upon developed countries in the context of the universal nature of social development. In that respect, he emphasized the situation in countries subjected to embargoes or economic sanctions, where all social development achievements had been impaired and the situation was one of total regression. Initially, Iraq's public service infrastructure had been destroyed by the allied forces' indiscriminate bombardments, and later, the imposition of sanctions had led to the collapse of all means of support for civil bodies providing services such as medical care, water purification, transport, fuel and food supply, and industrial support.

26. The World Summit for Social Development should give due attention to questions of social development in countries subjected to sanctions, depriving them of basic needs and constituting a source of social misery. Social development should not be obstructed by politically motivated sanctions. The international community should establish a mechanism to alleviate the sufferings of society and the repercussions of sanctions, which reduced the capacity for social progress and stability, essential elements of world peace and security.

27. Ms. DLAMINI (Swaziland) said there should be an understanding among the international community, developed countries, United Nations agencies, international financial institutions and donor agencies as to what social development entailed. Otherwise, developing countries would still be faced with external pressures to pursue economic policies which marginalized social development programmes. Structural adjustment programmes should acknowledge the fact that the human being was the centre of development; they should be applied without compromising the right of peoples to social progress.

28. People with disabilities accounted for about 10 per cent of the total population of Swaziland, and those without income received financial assistance from the Government. The Vocational Rehabilitation Centre provided training in such subjects as commerce, electricity, carpentry, sewing and leather-craft, and had a farm for training in agricultural work. A placement officer helped the Centre's students to find employment. The Government had prepared draft legislation on the training and employment of people with disabilities, considered the establishment of a revolving loan scheme for the disabled, and had carried out a study of the work of the Centre.

29. The Government was providing financial assistance to destitute elderly persons; they were given building materials and the help of voluntary organizations to rebuild damaged dwellings. It had also organized a radio

campaign to inculcate respect and consideration for the elderly. Veterans of the Second World War who had sustained incapacitating injuries received financial assistance in proportion to the extent of the injury, and the Government was currently considering extending that cover to all war veterans.

30. Concern was felt in Swaziland regarding the rising trend of youth unemployment, which had forced some young people to resort to crime and other anti-social activities. The Government had elaborated a national youth policy with the assistance of the Commonwealth Youth Programme Africa Centre. While the policy was awaiting final approval, the Government was giving annual grants to the various youth organizations through the Swaziland National Youth Council, but the amounts awarded were generally small. The private sector was usually reluctant to provide assistance; that problem was compounded by the fact that Swaziland had a small industrial sector.

31. Swaziland was grateful for the work done by non-governmental organizations and voluntary and religious organizations in providing relief services to the disadvantaged, with flexibility and swiftness that could not be equalled by the Government. For that reason, the Government was considering channelling a significant proportion of the amount meant for social development through the non-governmental organizations. A draft national policy on non-governmental organizations had been completed and the organizations themselves had accepted it; the document was awaiting final Cabinet approval.

32. Mrs. des ILES (Trinidad and Tobago), speaking on behalf of the 12 States of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) that were Member States of the United Nations, said that, in convening the World Summit for Social Development, the international community had embarked on a journey towards a more just and more prosperous world. The Caribbean Community had not escaped the crisis that was being endured by the least developed, developing and even middle income countries which were labouring under the weight of structural adjustment programmes and high external debt service payments, high rates of unemployment, particularly among young people, growing urban and rural poverty and increasing crime. The member States of CARICOM therefore had a high stake in the success of the World Summit and, individually and collectively, were actively engaged in the preparatory process, with the assistance, at the regional level, of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC). She urged that sufficient resources be provided to ECLAC to enable it to contribute to the elaboration of concrete programmes in the area of social development.

33. The role of the family in promoting the well-being of its members was indispensable. The countries of the Caribbean Community were striving to grapple with changing family structures and social mores and the debilitating effects of those changes. Poverty and unemployment had exacerbated changes in the traditional family structure; in the Caribbean subregion, there was a surge in single-parent families, mainly headed by women; parents held multiple jobs and had little time for their children, and there was growing alienation and despair among children and youth. It was therefore essential for all sectors of society and the international community to take action to provide the basic support structure needed to strengthen the role of the family unit.

34. Youth-related activities within the United Nations system had been woefully inadequate. However, a supportive role was being played by the United Nations Youth Fund through the provision of limited grants for projects geared towards the implementation of the Guidelines for Further Planning and Suitable Follow-up in the Field of Youth. It was also encouraging that a draft world programme of action for youth towards the year 2000 and beyond was being elaborated, and would be adopted at the fiftieth session of the General Assembly.

35. At the national level, enhanced cooperation was needed between government entities responsible for youth issues and young people so that they would be active participants in the development process. The CARICOM States were in favour of including in the world programme of action for youth the recommendation regarding the promotion of intergenerational programmes, since such programmes represented a positive way in which the talents, knowledge and experience of the elderly could be fully utilized in a collective effort to train young people and instil in them the values necessary for healthy, responsible and productive living. At the same time, States had to provide outlets for the creative energies and capabilities of the elderly, who should be beneficiaries of and active participants in the formulation and implementation of national programmes designed to meet their needs and aspirations.

36. With regard to disability issues, the member States of CARICOM believed that the draft plan of action to implement the Long-Term Strategy to Further Implementation of the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons to the Year 2000 and Beyond presented realistic measures to overcome the environmental obstacles and discriminatory patterns of behaviour which impeded the full participation of the disabled in the life of society. The draft plan of action provided important suggestions, some of which could be usefully integrated into the programme of action of the World Summit for Social Development.

37. The multi-sectoral nature of the issues to be addressed at the World Summit underscored the extent to which the outcome of the meeting could affect the lives of peoples the world over. The declaration and programme of action must therefore constitute more than an expression of goodwill on the part of world leaders. There must be an unequivocal demonstration of political will to address the various ills afflicting societies through the adoption of action-oriented measures, the establishment of effective mechanisms and the allocation of adequate resources to implement the commitments to be undertaken at the World Summit for Social Development. The member States of CARICOM believed that a fresh assessment of the role and functions of the Commission for Social Development needed to be undertaken and that its mandate and structure should be revised so as to transform it into an intergovernmental body since the efforts of the international community would come to nought if the follow-up mechanisms were inadequate.

38. Mr. AL-SAEED (Kuwait) said that in Kuwait social development was a matter of priority both at the level of general policy and in national plans and programmes. Citizens enjoyed all types of services at all stages of life. Those services, which included advice and material assistance, were provided

through social welfare ministries and bodies, and were not only offered at the national level, but also extended to friendly and fraternal States. Social development was a matter which concerned the entire international community; it was not limited to one country or group of countries, since man was at the heart of development and was its ultimate objective. Kuwait therefore attached great importance to social development and placed great hopes in the results of the World Summit; its participation in the meetings of the Preparatory Committee demonstrated that concern. The Fourth World Conference on Women was also important, since that type of conference reflected the growing interest of the international community in the various aspects of social questions.

39. The same importance should be attached to care for the elderly as to care for youth so that the elderly could participate fully in the life of society and in its productive activities. In Kuwait, special homes and associations had been established for elderly persons, and the result had been an increase in life expectancy, which was 72 years for men and 76 years for women; that made Kuwait comparable with the most advanced countries. Because of the investment that had been made in youth, young people were supporting the reconstruction of Kuwait, after its structure had been totally destroyed by the Iraqi invasion.

40. Kuwait was one of the countries which was in the forefront of social welfare for disabled persons; it believed that rehabilitation was extremely important so that disabled persons could be integrated in society and participate in achieving the objectives of development. Disabilities derived not only from genetic causes but also from brutal acts carried out by man. That was demonstrated by the large number of people in Kuwait who had been disabled as a result of the aggression unleashed against innocent persons, who had been subjected to torture and acts of violence. The international community should not only provide assistance to disabled persons but also struggle against dictatorial regimes which perpetrated the acts of aggression that caused those disabilities.

41. Ms. ARYSTANBEKOVA (Kazakhstan) said that social problems, which related to various aspects of the life of society, occupied an increasingly important place in the activities of the United Nations. In that context, she supported the idea put forward by the Secretary-General in his report on the work of the Organization (A/49/1) that "healthy social conditions strengthen the social fabric, reinforcing peace and development". The most vulnerable sectors of society, particularly the elderly, the disabled, women and children, were the sectors that were being hardest hit by the aggravation of social ills such as crime, drug addiction, poverty and unemployment. The World Summit for Social Development therefore represented a unique opportunity for the international community to develop new approaches and define effective forms of international cooperation for social development. It was to be hoped that as a result of the World Summit, substantive policies would be formulated to resolve the major problems in that area.

42. A national preparatory committee for the World Summit had been set up in Kazakhstan to coordinate all measures for maintaining social stability. She would like to see the declaration and the programme of action take more account

of the suggestions put forward by the Ukrainian delegation on behalf of Ukraine, the Russian Federation, Belarus and Kazakhstan, reflecting the interests of countries with economies in transition.

43. Kazakhstan, being in a period of transition, was facing serious difficulties such as declining production, rising inflation and shrinking national income. Owing to the imbalance between labour supply and demand, unemployment was rising and there were currently around 50,000 unemployed. The standard of living for the least well off in particular had deteriorated, and according to official figures there were around 3 million pensioners including over 340,000 disabled people. Young people were also in a difficult position. The Government was taking steps to overcome the economic crisis and create a legal and structural framework for socio-economic reform. Social welfare measures included modifying the law relating to retirement, increasing State aid to the disabled and establishing benefit funds for the poorest.

44. The international community was unanimous on the family's fundamental role in society; she emphasized its importance as a basic social unit which ensured the survival of societies and the well-being of their members. Kazakhstan too accorded high priority to issues relating to the family. A National Council had been established with the task of preparing for the International Year of the Family. It included representatives of the scientific, cultural and business communities which, together with the Government, were developing a policy on the family. There had also been various events around the country to mark the Year of the Family. Lastly, she hoped that 1995, the year of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations and the World Summit for Social Development, would be a new milestone in the history of the international community and would reinforce cooperation in a field of great importance for the activities of the United Nations.

45. Mr. BORDA (Colombia) agreed with the representative of Brazil, who had stated the Rio Group's position regarding the World Summit for Social Development. The Colombian President had already explained why it was necessary to initiate a new world system based on solidarity, respect for the self-determination of peoples and the quest for a better standard of living for all. Several factors militated against that objective: neo-protectionism, which threatened free trade, and especially non-tariff protectionism; impoverishment, exacerbated by the social costs of economic liberalization; unemployment, postponement of social investment programmes and neglect of the rural sector. Of similarly detrimental effect were the formation of trading blocs, which went against the idea of a world based on democratic rules of free trade for all on equal terms; and the selective appropriation of production factors, which placed developing countries in the impossible situation of competing on equal terms with the most industrialized countries in the world without having either possession of or fair access to sufficient factors of production.

46. While international cooperation and solidarity were without doubt fundamental to social development, the Colombian Government was modifying its policies to deal with the disadvantaged position of some sectors of the

population. It had therefore initiated specific projects, the principal and most ambitious of them being the establishment of the Social Solidarity Network, consisting of a set of programmes to be carried out through a variety of national institutions within the framework of a plan of direct social action. The aim was to improve living standards for the 33 per cent of Colombians for whom the economic advances had not yet been translated into higher levels of well-being.

47. The aim of the Social Solidarity Network was to complement existing education, health, social training and housing programmes. It was designed to improve particularly vulnerable groups' income and standard of living. It would thus focus on employment, food assistance, support for female heads of household with children of school age, help for the elderly poor, housing, recreation and the encouragement of sporting and artistic talent. It was based on a creative and efficient model of financing. The Government would reallocate internal resources from the national budget, and also receive amounts from local authorities and from multilateral credit agencies. For 1995, resource allocations would be the equivalent of 0.8 per cent of the gross domestic product, and from 1996 onwards that figure would remain around 0.9 per cent, representing a significant increase in national spending on social investment programmes. The basic objective of the Network was the elimination of poverty, on which development is predicated. It was also aiming at global social development objectives such as promotion of the worth and dignity of the human person and improvement of the standard of living of all human beings.

48. Mr. ELDEEB (Egypt) said that the issues being dealt with were important because they were closely linked with the programme of the World Summit for Social Development. He repeated his delegation's special interest in the preparatory work for the Summit, which aimed to develop a final declaration and programme of action acceptable to all participants and reflecting the international community's concerns in the field of social development. In order to do this it was necessary to take account of each society's idiosyncrasies and of different cultures and religions.

49. He wished to emphasize certain aspects of the issue. Firstly, the State played a primary role in the development process, which required support from cooperative action at the international level, since social development could not be achieved solely through the market economy. Secondly, the main difficulty for the majority of States, in particular the less developed and developing countries, was the lack of resources for development. It was therefore crucial to reach an agreement at the Summit for Social Development so that programmes and plans could be laid, and to make commitments to provide the resources necessary to finance them. Thirdly, social development could be achieved through the coordination of the work of Governments, United Nations organizations and specialized bodies, non-governmental organizations and the private sector. Fourthly, it was necessary to establish follow-up mechanisms for the implementation of the recommendations formulated at the Summit for Social Development. Fifthly, it was necessary to include in the draft programme of action preliminary estimates on the implementation of the plans and programmes. It was also essential to reaffirm international commitments in

order to be able to finalize appropriate development plans. Lastly, it was important not to become fixated on concepts, but to reach agreement on effective ways of relieving suffering, reducing poverty and dealing with the basic causes of destructive unemployment.

50. It was particularly important to implement the programmes for the disabled and the elderly. He therefore endorsed the Secretary-General's recommendations on the implementation of the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons (A/49/435), which was designed to ensure that the disabled participated effectively in all the activities of society. In the same way he was very interested in questions relating to youth. Youth programmes existed in Egypt, coordinated at national level by the Council for Youth and Sport. He was pleased that the draft programme of action to be adopted at the Summit for Social Development would focus on the problems of youth. With regard to the Secretary-General's report on policies and programmes involving youth (A/49/434), he repeated that it was important to ensure the coordination of youth policies and programmes so that young people could overcome the problems they had to face. Egypt wished to take an active part in the Summit for Social Development and to work for development in order to create a new and equitable social order based on respect for human rights and aimed at improving the quality of life for all. Furthermore, he hoped that the new social order would pay the required attention to the problems of Africa and the less developed and developing countries, since the people of those States were suffering great hardship.

51. Mr. REZVANI (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that, despite the efforts undertaken to achieve development, there were numerous unresolved issues concerning population growth, poverty, inequality, patterns of consumption and threats to the environment. All those issues were closely interdependent. To attain sustainable and stable development, the international community should attempt to promote the quality of life for today's generation without damaging the chances of survival of future generations. The persistence of socio-economic inequalities and disparity among nations negated efforts to better the lives of millions of people. All projects for change must be formulated to extend social justice and reduce inequalities in the distribution of resources.

52. The current problems of the young were on the rise in many countries. Depression due to feelings of isolation and alienation drove many young people to narcotics and aggressive sexual behaviour. In recent years, increasing numbers of violent crimes committed by the world's young people had been recorded. That might to some extent be explained by the easy access to deadly weapons in some countries. The international community should start the process of change by investing heavily in the future of the current generation of young people, which was the most vulnerable element of the population. Young people had strayed from their cultural and religious roots, and lost their identity. The high numbers of young people living in the world's communities made it necessary to create new jobs to help them escape from the cycle of poverty and unemployment. It was necessary to invest in training and education; society's progress was directly related to its ability to capitalize on its human

resources and produce technical experts. Such elements were necessary to the wealth and stability of States. The tenth anniversary of International Youth Year in 1995 would provide an opportunity to evaluate the issues of the world's youth and to formulate plans to encourage development, cooperation and harmony in that area.

53. Regarding the elderly, one of the major reasons for establishing social institutions was to ensure that their needs were met and that they were properly taken care of. It was essential to ensure their financial independence in order that they should feel self-sufficient and confident, but it should be done without isolating them from their families and social connections. Instead of being marginalized, the elderly should be looked upon as a valuable resource for every State. Another sector of the population requiring special attention was the disabled, who should be allowed to benefit from the progress achieved in rehabilitation and health. It was important to train experts to provide the necessary services; cooperation among international health institutions was also required, to enable the exchange of scientific information and know-how. Such activities should also take into account the cultural characteristics of each society.

54. Although the latest round of informal consultations for the World Summit for Social Development had been successful, the intergovernmental negotiations on the exact wording of the draft declaration and draft programme of action had not yet begun. Given the diversity of views expressed on the subject, the Preparatory Committee could not afford to delay the negotiations.

55. Mrs. OLSZOWSKI (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)) recalled, in the context of the preparations for the World Summit for Social Development, that UNESCO, through its scientific mandate, could contribute significantly to the follow-up to the Summit by providing technical cooperation and policy advice to member States and international organizations. It was necessary to tackle the causes and manifestations of social exclusion, in particular that based on cultural or ethnic diversity, migrations and other phenomena leading to various forms of discrimination; that could be done by means of strategies based on policy-relevant research. The UNESCO programme Management of Social Transformations was the first international social-science programme. All information on that programme could be obtained from the UNESCO secretariat in Paris through its New York liaison office.

56. A clarification of the cultural rights of persons belonging to minority groups could, with the help of UNESCO for the creation of normative instruments, facilitate the promotion and social integration of such groups. UNESCO's ongoing work on education for human rights could offer member States guidance on developing strategies and actions to promote the participation of civil society in public decision-making. UNESCO's experience was needed in endogenous capacity-building, education and training policies, strategies for human resource development, and for transfer and sharing of knowledge. Another example of the contribution of UNESCO to the follow-up to the Summit was the promotion of access to communication, which encouraged the social integration of

marginalized groups, particularly girls and women, through education and specific youth programmes. Social integration also meant access by the poorest sectors of society to the benefits of science and technology, an area in which UNESCO could play an important part.

57. On a regional level, various endeavours had been undertaken with a view to attaining some of the above goals. One example was a conference to be held in Italy, in cooperation with the University of Bologna, on the struggle against poverty, unemployment and social exclusion, and public policies, popular action and social development. In preparing for that conference, studies had been conducted on the current social crisis, with emphasis on cooperation between the State, enterprises and civil society, and the integration of social policies into a comprehensive set of public policies designed to foster sustainable development. UNESCO was convening, in December 1994, a national seminar in New Delhi, India, on science and technology for social development, in collaboration with the Indian National Institute of Science, Technology, and Development Studies. The purpose of the seminar was to identify the science and technology priorities for employment-oriented development strategies.

The meeting rose at 5.45 p.m.